

Our Pastor's Ponderings

Invitation to Lent

As I write, it is Shrove Tuesday—the eve of the season of Lent. It seems only yesterday we were celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus and now, here we are, already 30 years into His life and beginning that long trek to Jerusalem. Now we walk to the cross and ask the question: “On the road between the cradle and the cross, where does my life fit in?”

Lent is the season of 40 days (not counting Sundays) that fall between Ash Wednesday (which was about two weeks ago) and Easter Sunday. The church has set aside these 40 days for pilgrims like you and me to reflect on our relationship with Jesus Christ and how we live out our faith in the world. How are we doing following Jesus? We know Jesus ended up at the cross. His journey was a snapshot of his whole life, marked by caring for those on the margins, by opposing injustice, by deflating pompous faith, by making costly sacrifices. These 40 days are set aside to remind us of the way of Christ that we are all called to follow.

Lent reminds us that it is time for a spiritual checkup. This is a time of prayer and honest repentance and repentance is what prepares us for Easter Sunday, because, as Oswald Chambers reminds us, repentance is not what saves us; repentance is the sign that we realize what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. So, take the time during these 40 days to wrestle with your sin, to reflect on your relationship with Jesus, and to uncover those areas in your life that are getting in the way of your spiritual journey.

Many people feel Lent is a time of “giving up” the things we enjoy, but this season, let us think about the “giving up” of Lent in a different way. Reflect on the list below and consider how giving up these things would strengthen your relationship with Christ and with others, and help you to walk the way of Christ each and every day. Practice holy living for Lent.

Give up complaining—focus on gratitude.
Give up pessimism—become an optimist.
Give up harsh judgments—think kindly thoughts.
Give up worry—trust Divine Providence.
Give up discouragement—be full of hope.
Give up bitterness—turn to forgiveness.
Give up hatred—return good for evil.
Give up negativism—be positive.
Give up anger—be more patient.
Give up pettiness—become mature.
Give up gloom—enjoy the beauty that is all around you.
Give up jealousy—pray for trust.
Give up gossiping—control your tongue.
Give up sin—turn to virtue.
Give up giving up—hang in there!

May His amazing grace encourage us to consider our lives in light of His supreme sacrifice and may the resurrection life of Christ make a real impact in our hearts right here and now.

Welcome to the journey that leads to transformation.

Pastor Loril